

U.S. Eyeing Movement Of Troops in Lithuania

Concern Voiced About Soviet Intimidation

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White House spokesman Marlin Fitzwater said yesterday the United States is monitoring continued Soviet troop movements in Lithuania but the administration is "unsure" of Moscow's "intentions and purposes" in the independence-minded Soviet republic.

Fitzwater said the government yesterday was "receiving sporadic reports of various types of movements" by the Soviet military, and two other officials described the administration as being "concerned" that the activity is aimed at intimidation.

A State Department official said Secretary of State James A. Baker III is expected to raise the issue with Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze when the two meet in Namibia Tuesday. Baker, en route to Namibia, said of his upcoming discussion with the Soviets: "We will differ. We will urge the Soviets to give effect to the desires of the Lithuanian people for self-determination."

Baker said he would like to hear directly from Shevardnadze that the Soviet Union will not use force to stop Lithuania from seceding and establishing its own government.

A senior intelligence official in the Pentagon said there were no indications yesterday of a massing of Soviet troops in Lithuania, adding that U.S. officials were not treating reports of troop movements as the onset of a crisis. The intelligence official said Moscow appears to be trying to "ratchet up the noise level" in efforts to force Lithuania's leaders to accommodate Moscow's desires.

According to Stasys Lozoraitas, head of the Lithuanian mission here, ham radio operators in Vilnius, the Lithuanian capital, sent a report to the mission at mid-afternoon yesterday that raised the possibility of a Soviet military move to take over the Lithuanian radio and television station in the capital and the Ignalina nuclear power station

southeast of Vilnius, as well as certain border customs facilities.

The reports came as the Kremlin was warning the republic not to take steps involved with its vote for independence, including putting up its own customs posts, introducing its own currency or taking over factories—particularly the nuclear plant—now run by Moscow.

Lozoraitas, who described the mood in Lithuania as one of "concern based on attempts at intimidation" by Moscow, said he turned the reports over to the State Department and that two telephone conversations with Vytautas Landsbergis, the newly elected president of Lithuania, had persuaded Lozoraitas "there has been no violence, no confrontation. There are a lot of troop movements. They move in order to intimidate."

He said, based on the telephone calls and monitoring of Lithuanian radio and television, which he said were operating normally, the Soviets did not appear to have taken over any facility but had surrounded the nuclear plant. He said the Soviets were "protecting" the plant.

A State Department official said, "We are concerned. We are following things very carefully. The Soviets are engaged in some kind of intimidation against the Lithuanians. But how far they go, we don't know."

Earlier yesterday, Fitzwater held firm to the administration's decision to forgo formally recognizing the new government in Lithuania, despite a long-standing U.S. policy of refusing to accept the Soviet incorporation of Lithuania. Fitzwater said the White House "would wait until they are in control of their territory and their own destiny to make that kind of judgment."

Fitzwater declined to provide any definition of what "having control" of one's own territory means. "We should be a force for encouraging a peaceful process of development of democracy here and not one of trying to stir up any trouble," he said.

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contributed to this report.